



Washington Dental Service believes that better oral health — and overall health — starts with early intervention and prevention. Here are some simple tips to help avoid cavities:

- Brush twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste
- Clean between your teeth daily with floss
- Reduce between-meal snacks
- Limit intake of food and beverages high in added sugars
- Drink plenty of water, preferably fluoridated (bottled water does not contain fluoride)
- If you can't brush, chew sugar-free gum after meals or snacks to reduce the acid level in your mouth
- Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral examinations

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## Cavities — Big Problem with a Simple Solution

Cavities occur when your teeth are frequently exposed to foods that are high in carbohydrates (sugars and starches). The problem is that bacteria living in our mouths thrive in a sticky film on the teeth — known as plaque. Working in concert with the starchy or sugary deposits left on teeth, these bacteria form acids that, over time, damage and dissolve tooth enamel.

### Who Gets Cavities?

Children and adults of all ages can get cavities. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, cavities are the single most common chronic disease of early childhood. And as adults age, their teeth become more susceptible to developing cavities.

Dental emergencies caused from tooth decay may result not only in missed work, but can also impact your children. Cavities can affect how children learn to speak, damage self-confidence and cause missed days at school.

### Simple Solutions

#### Dental Sealants

Easily applied to the teeth, dental sealants protect chewing surfaces against decay-causing bacteria.

#### Fluoride Varnish

Studies show that fluoride varnish, a topical solution containing a high concentration of fluoride, is effective in cavity prevention when applied at appropriate intervals to the teeth.\* The application is a quick and simple procedure.

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Washington Dental Service is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association

\*A study by the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF)